

# Craigieburn Secondary College

## Attendance Policy

### **Rationale:**

Education is a continuous process. Absences often mean students miss important stages in the development of topics, causing them to find 'catching up' difficult. To reach their potential at school, students need to attend regularly. Educational research has repeatedly shown a strong relationship between success and attendance at school.

### **Aim:**

To maximise student learning opportunities and performance by ensuring that children required to attend school do so regularly, and without unnecessary or excessive absences.

### **Implementation:**

In accordance with the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, schooling is compulsory for children and young people aged from 6 – 17 years unless an exemption has been granted.

Parents/guardians must enroll a child of compulsory school age at a registered school and ensure the child attends school at all times when the school is open for instruction.

Students are expected to attend the school in which they are enrolled, during normal school hours every day of each term, unless:

- There is an approved exemption from school attendance or attendance and enrolment for the student, or
- The student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in a school for particular activities.

A Principal or regional director (depending on the circumstances) may authorise an exemption and provide written approval for student attendance or attendance and enrolment to be exempt or reduced to less than full time.

**For absences where there is no exemption in place, the parent/guardian must promptly provide an explanation on each occasion to the school. The school will determine if the explanation provided is a reasonable excuse for the purposes of the parent meeting their responsibilities under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006. Absences that the school does not determine to be reasonable will be known as Explained Unapproved.**

- Schools must maintain attendance records, identify and follow up unexplained absences, and develop policies to support and maintain attendance.
- Every absence must be explained – without exception.
- All enrolled students are required to attend school unless reasonable and valid explanation exist for them to be absent. (NB: Please see last page for valid explanations. Where these are not met, school will determine them to be explained unapproved).
- Where a parent has provided an explanation that the school determines to be not valid or reasonable, parents will be notified and required to provide a valid reason.
- It is the parents/guardians' responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and are only absent if ill or absolutely necessary. Parents/guardians have a further responsibility to communicate with the school why the absence has occurred.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for contacting the school before 9.00am to report their student's absence.
- Contact can be made a number of ways including via telephone (83394224), e-mail (attendance@craigieburnsc.vic.edu.au ) or utilising the school compass portal app or website (bit.ly/csccompass).
- If contact is not made before 10am and 3pm daily, an automated text message will be sent to the primary contact requesting contact to be made.
- Independent students not living with parents or guardians are also required to make contact if absent.
- According to the Department of Education and Training (DET) students must attend 100% of school days and will be exempt only under reasonable and valid grounds.



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Department of Education and  
Early Childhood Development

Victoria Government Schools

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- Students with a 90% overall school attendance rate or less will be considered a student at risk and the College will initiate the Absence Staged Response. Where a medical certificate is not provided for illness, the College will determine this absence to be explained unapproved.
- If a student is knowingly away for an extended period of time (a family holiday or surgery) it is the parents/guardians' responsibility to contact the relevant Year Level Coordinator (YLC) and to complete an Extended Absence Plan.
- Other reasons for absences such as participation in sport, camps or other school-based activities will not be counted as unapproved absences.
- Suspensions will not count as unapproved absences.
- Ongoing unapproved absences or lack of cooperation regarding student attendance will result in a Student Support Group meeting (SSG) with the student and family.
- Unresolved attendance issues may result in year level failure and may be reported by the Principal to the Department of Human Services and Department of Education.
- The Principal will ensure all student absences are recorded each period by teachers and communicated to the Department of Education and Training.
- The Department of Education and Training and enrolment auditors may seek student attendance records.
- Student attendance rates will appear on the student's semester reports. This information is available to parents at any time via the Compass portal.
- Aggregated student attendance data is reported to the Department of Education and Training and the wider community each year as part of the annual report.

#### **Strategies to monitor and record attendance:**

If your child is absent without communication by you to the school, you can expect a follow up SMS on the day of absence. Text messages are sent daily at 10am and 3pm. A message will be sent at 10am if your child has missed form assembly or period 1 or both sessions. A message will be sent at 3pm if your child has missed all sessions throughout the day.

Craigieburn Secondary College encourages all families to explain absences before or on the day of absence. Daily SMS are sent home and unexplained absences will initiate a Pink Slip to remind families to provide a valid reason for absence. *Please see what a valid explanation is.* Families have 5 days in which to return the Pink Slip to explain the absence. Pink Slips are sent home with the child upon return to school.

#### **All absences must be explained – Unexplained Absence Letters**

- **Level 1 (2 days unexplained absences)** – Email, SMS and a letter will be sent home by the relevant Year Level Coordinator/Sub-School Manager asking the family to provide a valid and reasonable explanation as to the absences.
- **Level 2 (5 days unexplained absences)** – Email, SMS and a letter will be sent home by the relevant Year Level Coordinator/Sub-School Manager asking the family to provide a valid and reasonable explanation as to the absences. The Assistant Principle will make a phone call to inform on DET Referral. **Where a student has 5 days of unexplained or unapproved absence the College is required to report via referral form to the DET's School Attendance Officer (Regional Director).**
- **Level 3 (10 days of unexplained absences)** – Email will be sent home and a phone call will be made by the relevant Year Level Coordinator asking the family to provide an explanation as to the absences and attend a Student Support Group (SSG) meeting. When no contact with the family can be made the Assistant Principal will call the emergency contact(s) to arrange an SSG meeting.
- **Level 4 (20 days unexplained absences)** – Email will be sent home and a phone call will be made by the relevant Assistant Principal to organize a Student Support Meeting (SSG). The Assistant Principal will track the students VSN.
- **Level 5 (25 days unexplained absences)** – Email will be sent home asking the family to organize a Student Support Meeting (SSG). **Where a student has 25 days of unexplained or unapproved absence the College will submit a second referral form to the DET's School Attendance Officer (Regional Director).**
- **Level 6 (referral to the Department of Education)** – a registered letter will be sent home signed by the Principal informing you that the College has sent a referral letter to DET informing them of your child's ongoing absences.



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**At 90% overall school attendance rate or less the student is considered at risk and the following staged process will occur.**

- **Explained Absence - Approved or Unapproved or Amended** – EO generated chronicle, automated email sent to parent/guardian acknowledging that the absence has been recorded as Explained Approved or Unapproved or Amended and updated from Explained Unapproved to Explained Approved.
- **Level 1 Letter - Attendance at Risk 90%** - EO generated Letter, SMS and Email to parents/guardians notifying them that the student's overall attendance rate has reached 90% or less, including Everyday Counts documentation. Informs parents/guardians on need to contact the College and support links for DET attendance information.
- **Level 2 Letter - Attendance at Risk 80%** - EO generated Letter, SMS and Email to parents/guardians notifying them that the student's overall attendance rate has reached 80% or less, including Everyday Counts documentation. Informs parents/guardians on need to contact the College and how parents/guardians can help support the student's attendance, including DET attendance information links.
- **Level 3 Letter - Attendance at Risk 70%** - EO generated Letter, SMS and Email to parents/guardians notifying them that the student's overall attendance rate has reached 70% or less, including Everyday Counts documentation. Informs parents/guardians on need to contact the College and how parents/guardians can help support the student's attendance, including DET attendance information and supporting information from external service links. **Where a student has 70% or less overall school attendance rate the College to report via referral form to the DET's School Attendance Officer (Regional Director).**

The following sub-school members roles are detailed below;

**Form Teachers will:**

- Distribute and collect **Pink Slips**.
- Actively follow up students who have not returned Pink Slips.
- Forward the returned **Pink slip note** to the relevant Executive Officer.

**Executive Officer will:**

- Enter student's unexplained absences via Compass Attendance page and select appropriate reasons to align with the Explained Attendance process.
- Monitor student's overall school attendance rate and for any students that reach a rate of 90% or less and action the absence process.
- Generate Compass 'Explained Absence Approved or Unapproved or Amended' Chronicle; automated email to parent/guardian acknowledging absence has been either explained approved or explained unapproved or amended from unapproved to approved.
- Generate Unexplained and Explained levelled absence letters to be signed by relevant sub-school team members and sent home.
- Generate Pink Slips to be placed in Form folders for distribution by Form teacher.
- Check Compass rolls daily for anomalies and email communicate this with teachers.
- Support teachers in identifying inaccuracies in attendance data ('false' absences etc).
- Identify unexplained single period absences; truancy; refusal; extended absences and communicate these to the relevant staff.
- Record absences not followed up and liaise with Year Level Coordinator; suspension days.
- Use Compass to produce weekly absence summaries for follow up if required.
- Document attendance observations on Compass.

**Year Level Co-coordinator will:**

- Monitor student's overall school attendance rate and for any students that reach a rate of 90% or less and action the absence process.
- Utilise Compass to monitor student attendance.
- Liaise with Executive Officer of sub-school to generate levelled Explained Absence Approved and Unapproved absence communications.
- Review absence summaries on Compass and report to Sub-School Manager.
- Phone to arrange appropriate intervention strategies (Student profiles, absence learning plans, SSGs).
- Work with student and family to complete a Student Attendance and Engagement Profile.
- Document attendance observations on Compass.

**Sub-School Managers will:**

- Monitor student's overall school attendance rate and for any students that reach a rate of 90% or less and action the absence process.



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- Utilise Compass to monitor student attendance.
- Support Year Level Coordinators in monitoring attendance using Compass.
- Meet with Year Level Coordinators to develop absence follow up plans as required.
- Export absence data from Compass and analyse this data.
- Implement strategies that will resolve unexplained or inadequately explained absences from students.
- Contact emergency contacts when no contact can be made with families.
- Arrange Student Support Group Meetings with student and families.
- Document attendance observations on Compass.

#### **Sub-School Principals will:**

- Monitor student's overall school attendance rate and for any students that reach a rate of 90% or less and action the absence process.
- In conjunction with Sub-School Managers, engage with families to schedule and complete Student Support Group meetings.
- Contact emergency contacts when no contact can be made with families.
- Track the students VSN.
- Complete Whereabouts Unknown referral form where a student has greater than 25 days or 10 consecutive days unexplained absence and an overall school attendance rate 70% or less.
- Liaise with Principal to seek attendance exemptions from the regional office.
- Document attendance observations on Compass.

#### **Subject Teachers will:**

- Keep accurate records of student attendance in their subject.
- Mark all electronic Compass rolls by 10am and 3pm daily (Within first 10 minutes of session).
- Contact students and home via phone or Compass email regarding work that is incomplete due to absence.
- Liaise with Year Level Coordinators and Sub School Manager about student attendance issues.
- Document attendance observations on Compass.

#### **WHAT IS A VALID EXPLANATION?**

- Medical Certificate / Certification / Principal (delegate) Approval.
- Bereavement/funeral.
- Dentist or other medical specialist appointments.
- School excursions and Sport days.
- Religious/cultural reasons are only considered as approved absences with Principal approval
- Family Holiday is only considered approved if supported by completed absence learning plan and teacher permission forms completed and sighted by YLC.
- All other absences not listed above are considered unapproved, and do not meet the attendance legislation requirements.

#### **Evaluation:**

As Part of the College review cycle this policy will be reviewed every three years.

#### **References:**

- DET Student Attendance Guidelines  
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/Pages/attendance.aspx>
- DET Attendance Fact Sheets  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/parents/health/attendancefaqsparents.docx>
- <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/studentmanagement/FactSheetforParentsandCarers.docx>
- <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/studentmanagement/FactSheetforSchools.docx>
- Student Assessment & Reporting Guidelines Advisory Guide Department of Education and Early Childhood Development  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/Principals/spag/participation/pages/attendance.aspx>
- Craigieburn Secondary College Promotions Policy
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- Ministerial Order 411

This policy was last ratified by School Council on: Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

This policy will be reviewed: November 2021.



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